

the progress you've made toward implementing the reforms necessary for consideration in NATO and the EU. I know this is a big concern to you. I want to thank you for sharing your thoughts with me about your country's desire to join NATO and your aspirations for the EU. I appreciate that very much. Thank you for your confidence.

All in all, I'm impressed by your leadership and welcome you to the Oval Office.

**Prime Minister Buckovski.** Thank you, Mr. President. I feel be here in the White House with President Bush—and the historic 10th anniversary of the U.S.-Macedonian bilateral relations, which I must say, have never been closer. We have agreed that today Macedonia is a success story in building a stable, multiethnic democracy in the Balkans.

I thanked President Bush for the continued U.S. support of our democracy, specifically for the U.S. role in the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, and to also express the gratitude of the people of Macedonia for U.S. recognition of our constitutional name, Republic of Macedonia.

And I told the President that we are proud to have our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that we intend to stay there as long as it is needed. We highly appreciate the leadership of President Bush—and advancing freedom and democracy throughout the world. We have both emphasized the importance of Macedonia's NATO integration and EU candidacy in cementing our progress and helping the region make the final step on the path of the Europe.

And finally, I told President Bush that Macedonia will continue to play a positive and constructive role in the Balkans, especially now, when Belgrade and Pristina, together, lead the international community, will start negotiation about eventual permanent status of Kosovo.

**President Bush.** Thank you. Appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:46 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks at the White House Conference on Helping America's Youth

October 27, 2005

Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome to Laura. Please be seated. Thank you. I am the introducer—[laughter]—a rare role for me these days but one I've been looking forward to.

First of all, thank you all for coming. I want to thank Howard University for hosting this important summit. I love to be with the armies of compassion. At my State of the Union last year, I asked Laura to lead an initiative to help young people grow up to be successful adults. And since that State of the Union, she has taken me up on my request, and she has traveled the country to observe and find best practices and programs that are changing people's lives for the better.

And so she called this summit to serve as a catalyst to continue to rally decent, honorable people who are working hard to make sure young Americans have a chance to realize the promise of this country. She is a great leader of this cause, a wonderful wife, and a wonderful First Lady for our country.

Laura Bush.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 a.m. at Howard University. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

## Remarks During a Tour of Areas Damaged by Hurricane Wilma in Pompano Beach, Florida

October 27, 2005

**The President.** I have come here with the Governor and the mayor of this area because I wanted to thank all the volunteers who have come down to help the people in need. And it's an amazing spirit after a disaster, and that spirit is the spirit of people willing to give of their time. I've also come to make sure the Federal response dovetails in with the State response. And people here—what I've